

Web-CMR/ELR Project Website: Frequently Asked Questions

(1) What is the Web-CMR/ELR project?

The purpose of the Web-CMR/ELR project is to provide the State of California with a secure, web-based system for use by health care providers, laboratories, local health departments, and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) for the reporting, surveillance, and case management activities of communicable diseases.

(2) What happened to Web-CMR/ELR?

Web-CMR started in 2003, when the Division of Communicable Disease Control (DCDC) conducted statewide meetings including 40+ local health jurisdictions to define a set of requirements for Web-CMR. Using a structured procurement approach, a software solution was selected by the State-Local Evaluation Team in early 2004. Implementation, configuration, and local readiness activities were carried out with significant progress into 2005. In mid-2005, the State Department of Finance (DOF) implemented budget processes for Information Technology (IT) projects. As a result, the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) reviewed existing IT projects during the fall of 2005, and determined that additional project documentation and project approvals were necessary for Web-CMR and ELR. Project activities were suspended in November of 2005, pending direction from DOF, after State testing of the solution had been completed, but prior to local testing and evaluation. However, during the State testing phase, DCDC determined that the software solution did not satisfy the requirements. During January 2006, DCDC in conjunction with the Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) completed the required Feasibility Study Reports (FSRs) for Web-CMR and ELR. The final FSRs recommended the acquisition of off-the-shelf software and a phased implementation approach.

The current Web-CMR/ELR Project Manager, Lance Jackson, was hired in May 2006 and has been working with DCDC staff, ITSD staff, CDHS leadership, and DOF staff to assess the project and move the project forward within the new structure. During summer of 2006, the State identified four (4) vendors with software that could potentially meet California's needs, through a review of vendors and implementations in other states. Through the fall of 2006, a market survey process was completed for the four software projects, and an in-depth review and refinement of the State's business requirements was initiated, leveraging the business requirements previously defined in 2003. This refinement of the business requirements was completed in early 2007. The State is currently in preparations to procure a new solution.

(3) What do "Web-CMR" and "ELR" stand for?

"Web-CMR" stands for "Web-Confidential Morbidity Report". The Confidential Morbidity Report, or CMR, is a form that health care providers use to report information about communicable diseases to the local health department, as required by law. At this point in time, health care providers generally report communicable disease information to the local health departments using paper-based methods, fax, and/or telephone.

"ELR" stands for "Electronic Laboratory Reporting". Laboratories in California are required by law to report certain conditions to the local health departments. Currently, much of this reporting process is a manual, paper-based system.

Automating these reporting processes, through Web-CMR and ELR, will save time and increase the quality of data, allowing for the more rapid identification of disease outbreaks and issues of public health concern, so that control measures and case management activities can be initiated more quickly to prevent further illness.

(4) What is the scope of the Web-CMR/ELR project?

- Electronic capture and linkage of CMR and laboratory data
- Centralized reporting of all CMR forms
- Electronic receipt and transmission of data from/to other electronic surveillance systems
- Case management
- Alerting and management of inter-jurisdictional issues
- Outbreak management
- State-wide integration of surveillance and reporting activities

(5) What is the timeframe of the Web-CMR/ELR project?

The Web-CMR/ELR project is expected to be a multi-year project including the planning, procurement, implementation, training, and multi-phased roll-out activities of a Commercial-Off-the-Shelf (COTS) or Modifiable-Off-the-Shelf (MOTS) solution. Stakeholders from local health departments and CDPH have refined the previously developed business requirements for the Web-CMR/ELR system. These business requirements, or the system features and capabilities, form the basis for the procurement of the system. CDHS/CDPH has released the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) in June 2007 and expects to select a single vendor to provide an integrated Web-CMR/ELR solution by the end of 2007. Configuration of the new system is anticipated to be undertaken during the first half of 2008, with a phased implementation of the system occurring throughout the second half of 2008 into 2009.

(6) What data will CDPH migrate into the Web-CMR/ELR system?

The CDPH will only migrate data from the Automated Vital Statistics System (AVSS) and the Tuberculosis Information Management System (TIMS) into the Web-CMR/ELR system. These are the data from the current state systems that are reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Additional local or disease-specific data may be migrated into the system at the expense of the jurisdiction or program area.

(7) How will the Web-CMR/ELR system be rolled out?

The system will be rolled out using a multi-phased approach, based on the functionality available and the jurisdictions participating. Each roll out phase will include readiness preparation, user training, and implementation.